

Nuclear Medicine Sentinel Lymph Node Injection

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine Sentinel Lymph Node injection on the morning of your planned surgery. We would like your visit to be as pleasant as possible and hope this leaflet will answer some of the questions you may have. Should you have any questions regarding your appointment please contact us on the appropriate telephone number below between 9am to 5pm - Monday to Friday:

- Conquest Hospital Appointments - Tel: 0300 131 5147
- Eastbourne DGH Appointments - Tel: 0300 131 4797

The surgical team will arrange for you to attend the surgical admissions ward on the morning of your surgery.

A member of the Nuclear Medicine team will come to the surgical admissions ward between 09:00am and 9:45am to carry out the Sentinel Lymph node injection.

What is a sentinel lymph node injection?

A Sentinel Node injection is a procedure that identifies the first lymph node that drains your tumour. This is called the sentinel node. A small amount of radioactivity is used to guide your surgeon when you have your surgery.

Is the procedure safe?

The amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible and is similar to other X-ray procedures. The radioactivity leaves the body very quickly and it will not make you feel sick or sleepy.

Do I need to prepare for the procedure?

You do not need to do anything special for this test but you should follow any instructions you may have been given about preparing for your surgery.

Is there anything I should tell the staff before the injection?

Female patients should tell us if they are pregnant, think they may be pregnant, or breast-feeding. Women between the ages of 12 and 60 will be asked to sign a form on the day of their test to confirm they are not pregnant. A pregnancy test can be done if there is any doubt.

What is involved?

You will be asked to remove all your clothing above the waist. A hospital gown is provided and you will be asked to lie on your back. An injection of a radioactive tracer is given into the affected breast. There are no side effects from the injection however it may sting a little. You will then be asked to gently massage the area for a few minutes to encourage movement of the tracer into your lymph nodes.

Precautions after the injection

Please follow any instructions you may have been given about preparing for your surgery. There are no other restrictions due to the Nuclear Medicine scan. If you are planning to travel abroad within 7 days after your appointment please inform the staff during your appointment.

What happens next?

Your surgeon will use a very sensitive radiation detector during your surgery to locate your Sentinel Lymph node. This lymph node will be removed and sent to the hospital laboratory for analysis.

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Sources of information

British Nuclear Medicine Society (BNMS)

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 1314731 or email: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department. Tel: 0300 131 4500 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Dr Emma Owens, Consultant Radiologist, Dr David Sallomi, Consultant Radiologist. Diagnostics, Anaesthetics and Surgery Division have agreed this patient information leaflet.

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Responsible clinician/author: Christopher Salt, Nuclear Medicine Modality Manager

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